

STUDENT ALPHA INVITATION LAUNCH

Tiger Tiger Nightclub, City of Glasgow

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1. Please describe your event

- We held a launch evening at Tiger Tiger nightclub. It is situated in the centre of Glasgow and so was really easy and accessible for students to get to. Around 100 guests came to the event.
- The nightclub was a really comfortable and non-threatening environment for non-Christians to come and hear the gospel.
- A live band played as the guests began to arrive and we had buffet style food which made it easy for guests to mingle with each other. It also allowed the hosts and helpers to chat with the guests and help make them feel at home.
- There was a live speaker who was really engaging. He kept everyone's attention with humour, stories and a great talk.
- When the talk was finished guests stayed on chatting with each other and everyone had free entry into the club for the rest of the evening.

2. Why did you decide to run a launch event?

Running the launch event caught the attention of the student community and helped them to have a 'taster' experience of what Alpha is like. We ran the launch event as a joint partnership venture between various churches across the city.



The whole course ran in the same club where the launch event was held. This created a sense of continuity and students knew what to expect each week.

3. How did you get a team together?

We contacted every church in Glasgow and asked if they would like to be involved. The churches that said yes gave two hosts and two helpers to the course and they then hosted a small group. We also had some extra helpers who formed the task force. Their role was to stand on the door, welcome guests, help with food and help with the logistics of setting up and taking down the venue each week.

4. How did you manage the finances for your event?

The event and the course were quite expensive to run in a nightclub. We estimated that it would cost approximately £30 per student to do the whole course and then we contacted everyone we knew, from Alpha contacts and Advisers to our Mums and Dads, and asked them to sponsor a student to do the course. We had an overwhelming response with some people sponsoring ten or more students. One lady, whose grandson is at university, loved the idea of him attending an Alpha course and so she sent us £30. The individual buy in was lovely and a real encouragement. Everyone who contributed was sent regular updates so they could join in with praying for the course and this helped get even more people involved.

5. How did you promote your event?

We sent out lots of flyers via churches, Christian Students groups and individuals. We also advertised in churches, by word of mouth and via a Facebook page.

The Flyer



6. Were there any hurdles?

When you are working with students, it is quite difficult to get confirmed commitment! It took a while to get hosts and helpers signed up and then we were never quite sure from week to week which guests were coming. As with every Alpha course, it was very disappointing if guests stopped coming or didn't turn up one week and at the same time, it was really exciting to see people on a journey.

7. How did you overcome these hurdles?

We prayed! We just had to get on with it. We never knew exactly how many guests were going to be there but we prayerfully guessed and it always worked out. We pressed on each week and had a great time with whoever came.

8. What was your main highlight?

It was fantastic to see students who started the course, unsure of what they were coming to and very far from believing in God, embark on a journey of faith. It is always amazing to see that.

9. Is there anything you would do differently?

After seeing a few different models now, I think that inviting guests in a more relational way, i.e. people bringing their friends, works better than handing out flyers. It also gives you a better idea of who will turn up each week as the friend bringing the guest can do follow up with them.

10. What was the impact of your event?

There were a lot of guests who came on the course as a result of coming to the launch event. We found that it worked well to advertise it as one event rather than as an eight-week course. The students enjoyed the launch and so came back for week one, they enjoyed that and so came back the next week and so on.

Helen's top tips:

- Pray, pray and pray some more!
- Put together a great team and train them well.
- Pick a venue that is welcoming and comfortable for guests.
- Set up two teams: one for hosting the small groups and one to organise the welcome, food and logistics.
- Consider involving the wider community by suggesting sponsorship and/or praying for a student.
- A launch event is a great way to give students a taster of Alpha before they commit to going on a course.